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SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 27th MEETING

Chairman:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON	(Uruguay)
later:	Mr. GUERRERO (Vice-Chairman)	(Philippines)
later:	Mr. PIRIZ-BALLON (Chairman)	(Uruguay)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 80: PROTECTION OF GLOBAL CLIMATE FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS OF MANKIND (A/47/82-S/23512, A/47/120, A/47/225-S/23998, A/47/312-S/24238, A/47/351-S/24357, A/47/391, A/47/449, A/47/466 and A/47/564)

AGENDA ITEM 78: DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (continued) (A/47/388 and A/47/393)

1. Mr. CUTAJAR (Executive Secretary, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change) said that the main recommendation in the Secretary-General's report on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (A/47/466) was that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee should remain as a universal forum for preparatory work for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would lay the groundwork for the decisions to be taken by the Conference of the Parties, monitor the functioning of the interim arrangements and promote a coherent approach to the implementation of the Convention. It would have appropriate linkage with the Commission on Sustainable Development. Other recommendations concerned the continued provision of secretariat support and the extension of extrabudgetary funding up to and including the first session of the Conference of the Parties.

2. He was pleased to announce that Fiji had been the 158th country to sign the Convention, and that the Marshall Islands and the United States of America had been the third and fourth countries to ratify it.

3. The sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would be held at Geneva from 7 to 10 December 1992. Inquiries about the possibility of holding the session in New York had elicited the response that conference services could not be guaranteed. An urgent decision on that matter must be taken in order to ensure the usual funding arrangements for participation in the session; those arrangements were currently under way.

4. In his report, the Secretary-General identified two keys to the success of the future work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee. The first involved the process for communicating and reviewing information related to implementation. The other was the provision of adequate financial and technological resources to enable developing country parties to play their part in responding to climate change; that would call for a well-functioning and well-funded financial mechanism of the Convention.

5. With regard to the future work of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, which would function as the interim secretariat for the Convention, he noted that substantive support for the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would need to evolve with that Committee's work programme. The secretariat could contribute to the collaborative effort to support the ratification and implementation efforts of

any countries that requested such support. In preparation for its future work programme, the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was planning to issue, jointly with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Information Unit on Climate Change, a newsletter on climate change, and it was considering a pilot programme of information/training workshops.

6. The ability of the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Committee to undertake such projects would depend on the number and skill of available staff, as well as the provision of non-staff resources. Extrabudgetary funding had been and would continue to be a welcome supplement. The Committee appreciated the loans of staff from United Nations bodies and the bilateral funding of posts; however, in order to ensure universality, the bulk of its funding should continue to come from the regular budget.

7. Mr. RIPERT (Chairman, Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee for a Framework Convention on Climate Change) said that, in order for the Framework Convention on Climate Change to enter into force, it must be ratified by at least 50 countries. So far, only four Member States - three small island States and one very large country - had ratified the Convention.

8. It was necessary to establish institutional procedures and machinery for the proper functioning of the first session of the Conference of the Parties. The Conference should not be a negotiating body, and it should have the authority to take decisions on the implementation of the Convention. In order to ensure that the Conference was operational from the very beginning, the General Assembly should give the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee a mandate to continue its work in that area.

9. There was a need for an in-depth analysis of the technological means by which the international community could take measures to reduce the greenhouse effect or to adapt to it. That concern was reflected in the agenda of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, whose next session would be held at Harare at the beginning of December 1992. That session had been scheduled just before the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee, and he hoped that there would be good linkage between the scientific and technical work of the Panel and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee.

10. The Panel should adopt structures that would enable it to respond more adequately to the needs of the international community. The Panel's chairman had taken steps to ensure that the largest number of countries, in particular the developing countries, were able to participate in its work. The results of the Panel's work should be subjected to a critical assessment of their validity. Efforts should be made to ensure that the Conference of the Parties had before it the most recent, complete and reliable information on climate change at its first session.

(Mr. Ripert)

11. The Framework Convention on Climate Change provided that the Global Environment Facility of UNDP, UNEP and the World Bank should serve as the interim financial mechanism of the Convention. To that end, the Facility should modify its structure and composition in order to conform to the requirements of the Convention. There was a need for a systematic exchange of information between the Facility and the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee during the interim period. The question of the mobilization of resources for the years to come would be on the 1993 agenda of the Global Environment Facility, which had resources until the end of 1993. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee and the Global Environment Facility could work together to ensure that resources were available when the Convention entered into force in 1994 or 1995.

12. While there was also a need for a small well-equipped secretariat to serve as the focal point for the implementation of the Convention, the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee could not be the sole body responsible for such a daunting task, which would require the mobilization of a great deal of technical expertise. International agencies, in particular UNEP and WMO, as well as other organizations, should provide support to the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in order to enable it to carry out its tasks efficiently. In particular, the secretariat should facilitate the exchange of objective information among all Member States.

13. Mr. OSSA (Director, Development Policy and Analysis Division, Department of Economic and Social Development), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on "Structural change in the world economy: implications for energy use and air emissions" (A/47/388), said that it provided estimates of the growth of global and regional GDP, energy use and air emissions of carbon, sulphur and nitrogen oxides up to the year 2020. Those estimates were determined by projected trends and relationships, within and among regions, in the composition of investment, foreign trade and consumption, and by the assumed rate of technology diffusion in developed and developing regions. Changes in regional and global air emissions were thus traced to changes in technology and the structure of production. Particular attention was paid to power generation, transportation and the energy-intensive industries.

14. Under the baseline scenario, per capita GDP would grow at an annual rate of about 1.2 per cent for the world as a whole between 1990 and 2020, and global air emissions of carbon from combustion of fossil fuels would reach about 9.5 billion metric tons per year in 2020. With higher growth of per capita GDP - around 1.7 per cent annually - carbon emissions would be about 11.2 billion metric tons annually in 2020.

15. The policy implications of the environmental and economic problems associated with global climate change depended on the extent to which their root causes could be addressed in the longer term. For instance, it was expected that many wasteful practices would gradually be eliminated. While

(Mr. Ossa)

the projections did not assume the achievement of any major technological breakthroughs, or the introduction of strong policy measures such as significant tax increases on fossil fuels or on carbon emissions, they did assume a significant diffusion of existing efficient technologies from the most advanced to the middle- and low-income regions, and of technologies to limit emissions of sulphur dioxide and the nitrogen oxides.

16. The report could be seen as complementary to the work of IPCC. IPCC had focused mainly on scientific questions related to the effects of greenhouse gases on the climate and of climate change on the economy, rather than on questions related to long-term projections of economic growth and development and the resultant emissions of greenhouse gases. The analysis before the Committee indicated that world energy use and related emissions of carbon dioxide were likely to be considerably higher in the year 2020. Indeed, under the high growth scenario, both carbon dioxides and nitrogen oxides would virtually double over the next 30 years.

17. The rational approach would be to emphasize research, so as to achieve more rapid progress in energy and materials conservation and in the use of environmentally benign sources; however, policies were also crucial. He called for further measures, including taxation, to slow increases in energy use, particularly in developed countries, and for more rapid diffusion of technological improvements, inter alia, by facilitating developing countries' access to energy-saving technologies.

18. Mr. Guerrero (Philippines), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

19. Mr. BRANNER (United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office) said that for the poor arid or semi-arid countries, the interdependence of environmental and development problems was a harsh day-to-day reality. Fluctuations in climate, soil degradation and desertification had long been the main stumbling blocks to those countries' development efforts. The Rio Conference had provided a new opportunity for the international community to assign high priority to the consideration of those problems. Africa had played a crucial role in that context. Intensive preparatory work by Governments had been supported by regional and subregional as well as by international organizations.

20. The report before the Committee (A/47/393) attempted to highlight the resources and arrangements necessary to implement the recommendations contained in chapter 12 of Agenda 21. A number of measures were needed to follow up action to combat drought and desertification. To begin with, chapter 12 of Agenda 21 was a frame of reference resulting from a long process of negotiation by the entire international community. The resources needed to implement the agreed provisions must now be mobilized as a matter of urgency. In particular, efforts to draft and adopt a convention on desertification must not be allowed to stand in the way of follow-up to and implementation of the programmes on desertification and drought.

(Mr. Branner)

21. Secondly, adoption of chapter 12 of Agenda 21 would be meaningful only if it was followed by an increase in the resources allocated to solving those problems. However, in the current economic and political climate, an increase in traditional bilateral and multilateral contributions would not be sufficient to cover even basic needs. Such contributions must thus be supplemented by new resources and innovative financial modalities. The regional banks might play a very important role in financing sustainable development programmes in their respective regions. A very promising example might emerge from the current discussions between the African Development Bank and UNSO aimed at identifying allocations specifically earmarked for activities to combat desertification.

22. Thirdly, special mention must be made of the Global Environment Facility, and of the calls made in the context of the Rio Conference to include the question of desertification as a fifth priority area of the Facility. A meeting of experts, organized by UNDP/UNSO in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Bank had been held from 28 to 30 October 1992, in order to make a technical and scientific contribution to consideration of the question of desertification as a global phenomenon.

23. Fourthly, in the context of operationalization of the concept of sustainable development, it was clear that the various programmes designed to set up strategic frameworks for the planning and coordination of activities concerning natural resource management must be harmonized. Taking certain countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region as an example, several initiatives had been launched in that field: plans of action to combat desertification, national action plans for the environment, tropical forest action plans, and national conservation strategies. Two years previously, UNSO had initiated meetings of the organizations concerned to enable those various approaches to be harmonized. Recently, it had been decided to pursue that effort, and another harmonization meeting was scheduled later in November 1992. That example might be taken up and extended to the other regions in the context of the establishment of sustainable development frameworks.

24. More generally, harmonization of operational activities in the sphere of natural resource management was indispensable. In that context, it would be useful to review the role and functions of existing inter-agency mechanisms to deal with questions relating to drought and desertification, such as the Inter-Agency Working Group on Desertification (IAWGD), with a view to increasing their effectiveness. Recent initiatives by UNDP, particularly the Capacity 21 programme and the sustainable development networks should also contribute greatly to implementation of Agenda 21, and of its chapter 12 in particular.

25. Lastly, at regional level, the organizations dealing with problems relating to drought and desertification must receive further political and financial support from their member States, and also from the international community, to enable them to work effectively.

(Mr. Branner)

26. The drafting and adoption of a convention on desertification would be a very useful means of promoting international cooperation and harmonizing national, regional and international efforts. It might also serve as a frame of reference for a broader mobilization and programming of national and international efforts. In view of the June 1994 deadline set for completion of drafting of the convention, and of the complexity of the question, the negotiating process should be initiated as soon as possible, to enable the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to hold its first session in the first part of 1993.

27. Mr. ZAMAN (Pakistan), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77, said that an immediate 60 per cent reduction in emissions of carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide and CFCs were needed if concentrations were to stabilize at current levels. Unfortunately, however, while acknowledging that responsibility for containing, reducing and eliminating damage caused to the environment must be borne mainly by those countries causing it, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change included no legally binding targets to stabilize or reduce such emissions by the year 2000. Accordingly the situation would continue to deteriorate.

28. In spite of their economic vulnerability, the developing countries had agreed to shoulder commitments under the Framework Convention. But implementation of those commitments, many of which required special expertise not available to all developing countries, was inextricably linked to commitments by developed countries. Transfer of technology on preferential and concessional terms was thus an essential prerequisite to implementation of the Convention.

29. Despite their good intentions, the developing countries would find it difficult to fulfil their commitments unless new and additional resources were made available. The Global Environment Facility had been identified as the interim mechanism for financing implementation of the Convention, although the duration of that arrangement had not been specified. However, the Facility was just one of a number of mechanisms and sources of financing. The Group of 77 attached great importance to restructuring the Facility to take account of the principles of democratic governance and transparency in decision-making and operations. The Facility should report directly to the Conference of the Parties, thereby ensuring effective monitoring of the financing made available for implementation of the Convention.

30. A strong political commitment was required, not only to implement the Convention, but also to build upon it so as to ensure a healthy environment for future generations. However, future commitments must not jeopardize the development of developing countries. The Convention recognized that emissions from developing countries would increase as those countries sought to meet their social and development needs. Meanwhile, the developed countries must assume responsibility for the damage they had caused to the climate.

(Mr. Zaman, Pakistan)

31. Desertification and drought were phenomena that chiefly affected countries of the developing world. The Group of 77 believed that the intergovernmental negotiating committee to draft an international convention on desertification should be set up during the current session of the General Assembly.

32. Mr. CAMERON (Australia) said that the speed with which agreement had been reached on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change had been a remarkable demonstration of the participants' will to succeed. While the Convention provided only a preliminary framework for action, it was nevertheless an important first step.

33. Australia had already put in place a range of activities that would assist it in meeting convention obligations in areas such as scientific research and cooperation, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and enhancement of sinks, adaptation and community information programmes. It was also developing a national greenhouse response strategy, which would provide a mechanism for implementing many of the commitments under the Convention.

34. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee was to be congratulated on the results achieved to date. However, much work remained to be done to prepare for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. His delegation thus called upon the Secretary-General to make the necessary arrangements to ensure that the Committee could continue to hold sessions until the entry into force of the Convention. It supported the extension of the arrangements for secretariat support to the Committee until such time as the Conference of the Parties designated a permanent secretariat for the Convention.

35. Australia also attached high priority to arresting and reversing desertification, and supported the efforts made by the international community to deal with that issue. Australia had considerable expertise in dryland farming and sustainable resource management of arid lands, which it hoped to contribute to the process. It supported the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee for a convention on desertification, and would participate actively in the development of such a convention. The convention must contain measures to address the underlying causes of desertification, so that vulnerable arid and semi-arid lands could be put to productive use over the long term.

36. Mr. MAHMOUD (Mauritania), speaking on behalf of Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia and his own country, said that those delegations looked forward to the prompt entry into force of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and to the integrated, comprehensive and effective implementation of its provisions. An adequate, transparent and universal financial mechanism was needed to provide developing countries with new financial resources and to ensure transfer of technology on a non-commercial basis. They endorsed the interim arrangements outlined in the Convention pending the latter's entry into force.

(Mr. Mahmoud, Mauritania)

37. Those delegations were deeply gratified by the international consensus calling for the elaboration of an international convention on desertification. The consensus amply demonstrated the urgency of adopting appropriate measures to combat desertification, as well as the global nature of a phenomenon whose impact was both economic and ecological in scope.

38. Although rapid and substantial intervention by the international community had made it possible to avert a greater tragedy in some areas, essential needs remained to be met; inadequate rainfall remained a serious problem throughout much of Africa, particularly in sub-Saharan and southern Africa.

39. The inexorable advance of the desert was one of the greatest challenges facing the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union. He underscored the damage wrought, inter alia, by desert encroachment, inadequate rainfall, the spread of sand dunes and accelerated soil erosion, all of which had a devastating impact on watercourses and groundwater supplies and undermined the economic base of the affected countries. Desertification also was wreaking havoc on the Atlantic and Mediterranean shores of the countries of the Arab Maghreb Union. The Mediterranean Sea, already threatened by pollution from the dumping of industrial and other wastes, should be permanently protected.

40. The Arab Maghreb Union had adopted a number of measures to combat drought and desertification, a charter on the environment and a drinking-water supply plan. The Union also planned to convene a conference to establish environmental protection priorities. Popular support for such measures also was being encouraged. He reiterated the offer by the delegation of Morocco at UNCED to host a high-level meeting on problems relating to water resources, particularly in Africa.

41. Severe economic difficulties, inadequate external financial resources and insufficient technological support had prevented the countries affected by desertification and drought from implementing the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification adopted in 1977. He therefore welcomed the priority attached to desertification at the Rio Conference and expressed the hope that the General Assembly would establish the proposed intergovernmental negotiating committee to elaborate an international convention on desertification before June 1994. Financing should be provided from the regular budget of the United Nations and the Committee should be given adequate secretariat support. On behalf of the States members of the Arab Maghreb Union, Algeria had offered to host the bureau of the proposed intergovernmental negotiating committee once it had been established. The delegations on whose behalf he was speaking pledged their readiness to join in the collective effort to discharge the responsibilities outlined at Rio.

42. Mr. Piriz-Ballon (Uruguay) resumed the Chair.

43. Mrs. DOWDESWELL (Canada) said that the global challenges of climate change and desertification demanded prompt action. The Framework Convention was the first truly global sustainable development instrument. It was action-oriented and would evolve and be strengthened as knowledge improved and a global community of interests solidified.

44. The early signs of broad political and public support for the Convention were heartening. However, much remained to be done. The interim arrangements recommended by the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would prove of fundamental importance in maintaining the desired momentum in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the Parties, which her delegation sincerely hoped could be held in 1994. The resolution on the work of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to be adopted by the General Assembly should set the stage for a fruitful process.

45. Her own country planned to ratify the Convention before the end of 1992 and was moving swiftly to carry out its own agenda on climate change. That effort included the preparation of its first national report by June 1993, cooperation with several developing countries on capacity-building, assistance in the development of a scientific work programme for the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in support of the Convention and advancement of cooperation on the comprehensive approach to emissions limitation.

46. Turning to the issue of desertification, another global problem that derived primarily from unsustainable human activities, she said that Canada itself was not immune to the effects of desertification, which were estimated to cost it millions annually in its Prairie provinces. That was of course nothing in comparison to the toll in Asian and, in particular, African countries, which should receive the highest priority. Her country had always been a major supporter of the fight against desertification in Africa through its development assistance programme and, recognizing the pressing need for coordinated action to combat the phenomenon world wide, it strongly supported the international consensus to elaborate a convention on desertification by 1994.

47. It was essential that the negotiations proceed on the basis of the best scientific - including the social sciences such as economics - and technical advice available. That must not, however, be used as an argument for delay. A mechanism to ensure the provision of expert advice on desertification should be developed immediately.

48. While national action would remain the primary determinant of success, it must be undertaken and coordinated within a reinforcing international framework in which the broadest possible participation by the North and the South was assured. The support of citizens', women's and non-governmental organizations should be encouraged.

49. The negotiating environment for the desertification convention required the strong leadership of an active chairman and bureau, the sustained energy

(Mrs. Dowdeswell, Canada)

of an effective secretariat and the full support of all relevant United Nations agencies and other international bodies. It would be particularly important to identify innovative and equitable negotiation mechanisms that would balance the need for the participation of all with the reality that fruitful negotiation among 150 sovereign States was exceedingly difficult. The efforts of the Secretary-General to adapt the United Nations to that new global reality should assist in meeting that challenge.

50. Mrs. FREUDENSCHUSS-REICHL (Austria) said that her delegation looked forward to the adoption of a resolution calling for the initiation of the intergovernmental negotiating process to elaborate the convention to combat desertification.

51. Her Government planned to move swiftly towards ratification of the Framework Convention on Climate Change. Although global action was needed to stabilize the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, the industrialized countries had a special responsibility to move ahead with national measures such as drastic reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, preservation and restoration of woodlands, a general halt in the production of chlorofluorocarbons by 1995 at the latest, and restrictions on the global increase in nitrogen oxide and methane emissions. She also underscored the importance of adequate action at the regional level, and welcomed the tax proposed by the Commission of the European Communities to curb carbon dioxide emissions and enhance the efficient use of energy.

52. In the coming years it would be important to overcome the obstacles that had stood in the way of a stronger Framework Convention on Climate Change. The list in article 4, paragraph 8, of the Convention of categories of countries whose specific needs and concerns were recognized, as well as the problems they faced, should guide efforts to protect the global climate for present and future generations.

53. Mr. MALLYA (United Republic of Tanzania) welcomed the decision adopted at Rio, calling for an international convention on desertification. Desertification had four primary causes: overcultivation, overgrazing, deforestation and poor irrigation practices, all of which were influenced by population changes, climatic variations and changing social and economic conditions. In his country, as in most developing countries, environmental degradation and poverty went hand in hand. Accordingly, environmental protection programmes would succeed only if they were integrated in socio-economic development programmes designed to meet particular regional and country requirements. His delegation hoped that the negotiating process would result in a programme which addressed the socio-economic dimension of environmental degradation. Naturally, such programmes must encompass poverty eradication and the promotion of an alternative livelihood in areas prone to drought and desertification.

(Mr. Kallya, United Republic of Tanzania)

54. Also, an integrated approach was needed to the planning and management of land resources in view of the interrelationship between social systems and those resources. Successful anti-desertification programmes must be integrated into national development plans, tropical forest action plans, national conservation strategies and national environmental action plans. In view of the transboundary and global nature of desertification, a multisectoral and multidimensional approach was needed. The proposed convention would help promote regional integration and cooperation and the harmonization of national, regional and international efforts.

55. The funds allocated to combat drought and desertification had been insufficient. As a result, eastern and southern Africa currently were in the grip of the worst drought since the beginning of the century. The Global Environment Facility could not yet cover the full range of the relevant Agenda 21 provisions, and it should be expanded to accommodate drought and desertification programmes. UNDP's Capacity 21 also could be expanded to support such programmes. Chapters 33 and 34 of Agenda 21 on financial resources and mechanisms and the transfer of environmentally sound technology and capacity-building should be fully implemented.

56. He hoped that the Secretary-General would establish an ad hoc secretariat and multidisciplinary expert group as soon as possible - perhaps as early as January 1993 - to help the intergovernmental negotiating committee on desertification begin its work. He also urged all States to organize national, subregional and regional activities to support the negotiation process by involving the scientific and industrial communities, trade unions, relevant non-governmental organizations and other interested groups. His delegation would work closely with the proposed intergovernmental negotiating committee to encourage the conclusion of the convention in 1994.

57. Mr. WISIBONO (Indonesia) said that the substantial support demonstrated thus far for the Framework Convention on Climate Change underscored the growing awareness of the international community of the importance of prompt and effective action to deal with global warming. However, the fact that progress had been made did not mean that the international community could be complacent. The ultimate objective of stabilizing the atmospheric build-up of greenhouse gases at safe levels was not yet assured. Success would depend on such factors as the ability to progress on the basis of new scientific findings and the adequate provision of financing and access to technology.

58. His Government had initiated the ratification process in accordance with its constitutional procedures and hoped that other countries would follow suit, in order to facilitate the early entry into force of the Convention. His delegation welcomed the fact that the Government of Germany had offered to host the first session of the Conference of the Parties.

59. Prior to the Convention's entry into force, the interim preparatory process should establish the means to communicate information from the developed countries and to develop a financial mechanism. His delegation was

(Mr. Wisibono, Indonesia)

pleased that the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee would continue to operate during the interim period. The question of financial and technological resources would gain increased importance once the Convention entered into force, and those issues should be taken seriously into consideration during the interim phase.

60. Mr. SIEBER (Observer for Switzerland) said that until the Framework Convention on Climate Change came into force, the Negotiating Committee should pursue its work in order to prepare a first session of the Conference of the Parties that was both fruitful and successful. One of the foremost priorities in that regard would be to activate the communication of information mechanism which had a central role in the control of compliance with the provisions of the Convention. The interim programme of work must also further address the issues related to financial commitments. In that respect, it was essential that developing countries and countries whose economies were in transition be fully associated in the work.

61. With regard to financial support, the United Nations budget would have to earmark resources to cover the interim period. Switzerland was ready to contribute substantial resources by way of voluntary funds in order to enable the secretariat to function effectively and to ensure the full participation of developing countries and countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the secretariat's work during the interim period. It would also be crucial for negotiators to have a permanent link to scientific, technical and economic information sources and the interim secretariat should play an important role in that regard.

62. The issue of the limitation of emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases must also become an integral part of the interim work programme. In his delegation's view, specific protocols, particularly on carbon dioxide or energy, should be elaborated rapidly. Since the Second World Climate Conference held in Geneva two years previously, Switzerland had been committed to working towards concrete action by industrialized countries on such emissions and it remained firmly convinced that the stabilization of such emissions by the year 2000 was both indispensable and feasible.

63. His country together with Austria and Liechtenstein had made a joint statement on signing the Framework Convention on Climate Change underscoring the "importance of the work to be carried out during the interim period pending entry into force of the Convention" and the need to take "early decisions on the preparation of protocols to the Convention on specific issues".

64. Mr. CAMARA (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations) said that efforts to combat drought and desertification had so far yielded only limited results because of the lack of an integrated sustainable development approach and the absence of political will and required resources. FAO had made a substantial contribution to the United Nations Conference on

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

Environment and Development, and the main guiding principles with respect to the general approach to and strategies for combating drought and desertification had now been identified.

65. The success of efforts to combat drought and desertification would depend largely on the adoption of rural development policies and the provision of sufficient financial means to implement them. It was heartening to note that the Conference had launched a process of negotiation on an international convention on desertification. FAO would support the efforts of the negotiating committee to the fullest extent of its possibilities. At the same time it very much hoped that the discussions on an international convention on desertification would not divert attention from the urgent need for specific action in the field to provide for the food security of the populations concerned.

66. Turning to agenda item 80, he noted that global climate considerations could not be separated from the issue of sustainable development. FAO regarded climate as one of the major natural resources; consequently, climate resources, particularly the regional and temporal distribution of rainfall and its utilization, received substantial attention.

67. Current FAO activities which were of direct relevance to the protection of the global climate included studies to improve understanding of climate-agriculture systems, the net reduction of atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and emissions through promotion of afforestation and alternative sources of energy and the reduction of agricultural sources of greenhouse gases.

68. With a view to improving the understanding of climate-related phenomena, his organization's activities addressed a range of subjects. Thus, for example, it cooperated with the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme (IGBP) of the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU) in particular with regard to agriculture and forestry as driving forces of climate change, and the impact of such change on agro-ecosystems. Also, in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Programme, it was executing through the Environmental Change Unit of Oxford University, a three-year impact study on human population supporting capacities which would map shifts in agro-ecological potential at the global and regional level in response to climatic changes as projected from high-resolution general circulation models.

69. FAO also aimed at reducing atmospheric carbon dioxide levels and emissions, promoting afforestation and reforestation programmes as one of the potential sinks of atmospheric carbon and collecting valuable baseline information for estimating the global carbon contribution from biomass burning and the response of forests to stress and climate change. FAO was actively promoting research into biofuels as an alternative and sustainable substitute for fossil fuels; collaborating with agricultural research institutes to reduce methane and nitrous oxide emissions from flooded rice fields and

(Mr. Camara, FAO)

offering support to member Governments in the development and demonstration of strategies for the introduction of energy-efficient and environmentally friendly systems of animal husbandry.

70. Mr. IBRAHIM (Djibouti) said that over 40 million people were currently suffering from famine caused by Africa's worst drought since the beginning of the century. Although no effort had been spared in Africa to implement the Plan of Action to Combat Desertification, and although Africa had received an estimated $490 million in assistance in 1986 (about 3.5 per cent of the total of official development assistance it had received that year) in connection with desertification and drought control, that was still not enough to deal with the problem. His delegation endorsed the suggestion in paragraph 36 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/393) that the General Assembly consider requesting that a certain percentage of the expected increase in ODA be earmarked for desertification activities. If that were done it would be a real sign of the international community's determination to implement the Rio commitment to genuinely sustainable development for all.

71. With respect to implementing the decisions relating to the financing required for Agenda 21, the implementation of the programmes recommended in chapter 12 would require new and additional resources on a concessional basis. The costs of the measures envisaged would amount to $6.73 billion each year between 1993 and the year 2000. Needless to say, developing countries, particularly the least developed ones already affected by such phenomena, could not afford that sum even if, as proposed in Rio, 50 per cent of the programmes and activities of Agenda 21 were to be covered by new and additional financial resources. His delegation very much regretted that no agreement had been reached on the African proposal to identify a separate financing mechanism for drought and desertification.

72. Consequently, it was imperative for the international community to shoulder its specific financing commitments to help implement chapter 12 and other chapters closely connected with the question at the current session of the General Assembly, in particular for countries of the Sudano-Sahelian region that were the most affected.

73. One of the channels for funding programmes under chapter 12 at the regional level might be to establish a new window at the African Development Bank (ADB) intended exclusively for desertification and drought as well as the protection and management of natural resources. His delegation also welcomed the efforts made by the Director of the United Nations Sudano-Sahelian Office (UNSO) and ADB to see to it that the Global Environment Facility identified desertification and drought as its fifth priority area and urged the international community to support those efforts.

74. Although his delegation greatly welcomed the decision taken by the Rio Conference to draft an international convention to combat desertification, such a convention should be regarded as a substitute for immediate action in keeping with the decisions of the Rio Conference.

(Mr. Ibrahim, Djibouti)

75. Finally he paid tribute to the work done and the decisive role played by UNSO in collaboration with the Permanent Inter-State Committee on Drought Control in the Sahel (CILSS) and IGADD and commended the valuable assistance they had given to African delegations during the preparatory phase of the negotiations on the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

76. Mr. SINGH (India) said that the problem of climate change was particularly pressing for India, which faced the prospect of severe adverse effects on agriculture and flooding of large areas of coastline and island territories. Although the bulk of greenhouse gas emissions originated in the developed countries, some people had argued that because every country emitted at least some carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, all countries bore responsibility for corrective actions. As the language of the convention stated explicitly, however, because global warming was, in fact, a result of excessive emissions, responsibility for corrective actions to combat it rested primarily with the countries responsible for excessive levels of per capita emissions. At the same time, given sufficient resources, developing countries would participate actively in efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

77. It was also recognized that the process of development would inevitably lead to increased greenhouse gas emissions in developing countries and that the existing disparity in levels of per capita energy consumption between developed and developing countries would have to be redressed over time. As soon as their per capita emissions reached the agreed common ceiling, the developing countries would have to accept obligations similar to those of the developed countries. That was his Government's understanding of the principle of common, yet differentiated responsibility.

78. The participation of developing countries in world-wide environmental protection activities presupposed their being provided with the means for participation. The developed countries should therefore make available new and additional financial resources to developing countries in order to facilitate a common effort. His Government supported the recommendation in paragraph 22 of the Secretary-General's report (A/47/466) regarding the establishment of financial mechanisms for technology transfer. His Government also looked forward to indications of the commitment of the developed country Parties to implement Convention objectives regarding finance and technology transfer in advance of the entry into force of the Convention. India would contribute to the discussion in the Committee on various aspects of the interim phase of implementation of the Convention, including, inter alia, recommendations on participation, supplementary funding and secretariat support.

79. Mr. RYAN (United States of America) said that his Government was extremely pleased by the progress that had been made internationally on the issue of global climate change. The Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee must now prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Items requiring attention at the meeting would include methodologies for

(Mr. Ryan, United States)

reporting net greenhouse gas emissions and for evaluating emissions abatement programmes and measures. Moreover, a suitable set of rules of procedure would be required for the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, together with coordination of activities in support of developing country participation in the Convention process. The General Assembly should continue to provide, within existing resource levels, financial and logistic support for the Committee secretariat; the Committee should continue to meet - as necessary and appropriate - to prepare for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. Any amendments to its proposed plan of work should be discussed at the forthcoming meeting in Geneva.

80. He noted that despite the fact that many countries had signed the Convention, to date only four countries, including his own, had ratified it. He urged all countries to move swiftly to complete their domestic ratification procedures so that the important work of implementing the Convention could begin. He recommended that any climate change resolution adopted by the General Assembly should include a similar appeal. In regard to the question of drought and desertification, his Government considered combating desertification to be one of the more important questions before the General Assembly. The Rio Conference had laid out a new approach to the problem built around an international convention. His Government would participate actively and constructively in the initial deliberations on the subject.

81. Mr. SUGANO (Japan) said that while it was encouraging that so many countries had signed the Framework Convention, the latter's effectiveness would obviously depend upon the broad participation of both developed and developing countries. For its part, Japan had been making efforts to expedite the process of ratifying the Convention.

82. Since it was of great importance that the Convention should enter promptly into force, his Government welcomed the agreement on interim arrangements for the entry into force of the Convention, and looked forward to the upcoming session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in Geneva; should the need exist, the General Assembly could consider authorizing the Committee to hold a subsequent session.

83. The role of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change would continue to be of great importance. The decision to give the Panel the tasks of technical and scientific support was quite appropriate. His Government looked forward to the forthcoming second assessment report and also wished to continue to contribute to the Panel.

84. Measures taken to reduce greenhouse gases could only be effective over the long term if they were consistent with sustainable economic development. Strategies and measures to mitigate the greenhouse problem should be formulated with due attention to the conditions obtaining in each country. Japan had begun implementing a medium-term plan for greenhouse gas emissions without waiting for the entry into force of the Convention.

(Mr. Sugano, Japan)

85. Turning to the question of desertification, he said that it was a complex one encompassing a variety of meteorological, economic and demographic factors. As a result, efforts to tackle the problem should be organized in a coordinated way. His Government therefore supported the proposal at the Rio Conference to proceed with the negotiation of an international convention on the subject. In formulating programmes to address the problem of desertification, due attention should be given to the particular natural and socio-economic conditions of the countries or regions concerned. At the same time, international cooperation - particularly within the framework of the United Nations system - was also very important in supplementing and reinforcing efforts at lower levels.

86. Regarding the negotiating process for any convention on desertification he said that attention should be given to the role of other organizations inside and outside the United Nations system in sharing their accumulated expertise and experience in the desertification field. Such experience, and the results of projects previously undertaken, must be reviewed, and, to the extent possible, made available for consideration during the negotiating process. It was important to make use of existing bodies or organizations for secretariat support before any new bodies were created, unless there was a particular requirement for establishing an ad hoc secretariat. Over the years, UNEP - and specifically UNSO - had performed a central role in coordinating activities in this field, and so could provide adequate secretariat support to the negotiating committee. He recommended that the matter should be discussed in informal consultations.

87. Given the time constraints - namely, the need to finalize a draft convention on desertification by June 1994 - and experience with the negotiations on the Framework Convention and the Convention on Biological Diversity, the negotiating committee should hold fewer than five meetings and the content of the convention should not be prejudged.

88. Mr. BORG (Malta) said that although the Framework Convention on Climate Change did not perhaps meet all the concerns expressed, it nevertheless laid down a solid base for mapping out response strategies and strengthening cooperation and understanding. Responsibility for implementing the Convention rested on Member States. Prompt entry into force of the Convention would facilitate action to stabilize emissions of atmospheric gases and open the way for further protocols. Malta was actively considering steps to ratify the Convention and urged other countries to do likewise. His delegation noted with satisfaction the decision of several developed countries to make available, in advance of the entry into force of the Convention, information regarding measures they had taken consistent with their commitments thereunder.

89. His delegation would support measures to allow the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to continue to function until the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties and to extend the mandate of its secretariat. The forthcoming sixth session of the Committee should give all signatory States

(Mr. Borg, Malta)

the first opportunity to organize together the future work to implement the provisions of the Framework Convention, which could receive a further important input from the meetings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change to be convened in Zimbabwe the following week.

90. Another valid response to the ongoing efforts to consolidate the issue of climate change on the international agenda would be the convening, the following April, under the auspices of the World Meteorological Organization, of an intergovernmental meeting on the world climate programme to consider specific actions connected with the implementation of the relevant chapter of Agenda 21.

91. Malta had recently launched an international programme that would seek to identify and assess the possible consequences of climate change within the various ecosystems and their significant effects on the national economy and environment. Together with representatives of Mediterranean coastal areas, and with the assistance of the Climate Research Unit of the University of East Anglia and of UNEP's Coordinating Unit for the Mediterranean Action Plan, Malta had attempted to produce a Mediterranean basin scenario and to develop scenarios of future local climate for the selected study areas.

92. Careful monitoring and observation of climate conditions and identification of possible preventive policies was a continuing exercise which required international cooperation. Climate change could disrupt and endanger human life itself. Politicians, economists, environmentalists and scientists should work hand in hand to find meaningful and effective policies and measures that responded to climate change.

93. Mr. BIAOU (Benin) endorsed the statement made by Pakistan on behalf of the Group of 77 and expressed the hope that Benin would be among the first 50 States to ratify the Framework Convention on Climate Change. He reiterated his delegation's conviction that the Convention must be supplemented by at least two protocols.

94. As his delegation had already pointed out, the sixth session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee should be postponed until the beginning of 1993. Naturally the Committee would have to meet in 1993 and 1994 to carry out the plan of work in preparation for the first session of the Conference of the Parties. As noted in paragraph 19 of the report (A/47/466), the key to the Convention's success lay in the provision of adequate funds and technical resources to allow the developing countries to play their role in responding to climatic change; another essential need was for the provision of Training. He thanked all who had provided funds and expresed the hope that they would maintain their effort in order to replenish the special voluntary fund which should provide adequate support for participation in the sixth session of the Committee.

95. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on combating desertification and drought (A/47/393), he noted that the extreme drought

(Mr. Biaou, Benin)

currently affecting southern and western Africa aggravated the continent's critical economic situation and that the dryland environments of the Sudano-Sahelian region presented formidable problems to sustainable development. The total annual financing required to implement chapter 12 of Agenda 21 was some US$ 12.2 billion, about half of which would have to be provided through external financing. In that connection, his delegation endorsed the proposal made by Djibouti concerning the opening of a special desertification and drought window at the African Development Bank.

96. Chapter 12 of Agenda 21 should be implemented in full to complete the efforts made since the adoption of the 1977 Plan of Action to Combat Desertification. The first step should be the establishment of an intergovernmental negotiating committee to elaborate an international convention on desertification, to be completed by June 1994. His delegation earnestly hoped that the draft resolution to be submitted by the Group of 77 on the topic would receive widespread support.

97. Mr. YERG (World Meteorological Organization) said that his organization remained committed to helping the secretariat of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee in its task of preparing for the first meeting of the Conference of the Parties. The Executive Council of WMO had given further guidance to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change on how it could assist with the Framework Convention process and had recommended that special efforts be made to review WMO programmes to evaluate their possible contributions to the implementation of the Framework Convention. It had also recommended that a special Executive Council working group should meet to refine WMO policies in the light of the Framework Convention. The Working Group was due to meet later that month. The Executive Council had also requested the Secretary-General to explore opportunities for hosting the secretariat to the Framework Convention in Geneva.

98. The Executive Council of WMO had also taken an active stance regarding WMO's participation in implementing Agenda 21, with particular emphasis on the organization's contributions to the forthcoming negotiations on a convention on desertification. His organization was prepared to play a similar role in the negotiations for that convention as it had done in connection with the climate change Convention.

99. The World Meteorological Organization was planning, in conjunction with other United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, an intergovernmental meeting on the World Climate Programme, from 14 to 16 April 1993. Two of the meeting's most important goals would be to define the interlinkages between the many international and regional climate-related programmes and activities and to help determine priority areas for the future activities of the World Climate Programme based on Agenda 21 and the Framework Convention. His delegation hoped that the meeting would produce commitments by countries and organizations to strengthening and coordinating their climate-related activities as well as specific pledges of support for implementation of those activities, especially in the developing countries.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.